

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

Method, system, and
apparatus for accepting transaction reservation,
and recording medium

5

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method for accepting transaction reservation, in which charges to offer products or services are presented on a network, and reservation to pay the above charges for the products or the services is accepted; a system and an apparatus for accepting transaction reservation to execute the above method; and to a recording medium to store computer programs which cause a computer to function as the above apparatus.

10 In a shop to offer various kinds of products and services, there have been a time zone (hereinafter, called as a quiet time zone) when only a few customers visit there, according to characters of the products or services which are handled there. There may be quiet time zones between breakfast and lunch, and between lunch and supper, for example, in a shop such as a restaurant to offer dishes. On the other hand, a shop such as a supermarket may have quiet time zones during lunch, supper and the like.

15 However, it may be preferable to shorten such quiet time zone as much as possible in order to efficiently offer

to the above terms instead of performing transactions based on the above terms; a system and an apparatus for accepting transaction reservation; and a recording medium for them.

~~The method according to a first invention is~~
5 ~~characterized in that a method for accepting transaction~~
~~reservation, comprising the steps of: electronically~~
~~presenting information on transaction favors of a~~
~~transaction target defined for each time zone to a plurality~~
~~of customers; electronically accepting information on~~
10 ~~transaction reservation at a selected time zone by a~~
~~customer; and performing a transaction with favors for the~~
~~reserved transaction target, when the visiting time of a~~
~~customer to a shop, or the finish time of the transaction is~~
~~included in the time zone in association with said accepted~~
15 ~~information on transaction reservation.~~

The method according to a second invention is characterized in that a method for accepting transaction reservation of a transaction target, comprising the steps of: determining terms for a transaction of a transaction; displaying the determined terms for the transaction ; and accepting reservation of transaction of the transaction target based on the displayed terms.

The method according to a third invention is characterized in that, in the method according to a second
25 invention, the step of determining the terms for a

transaction is a step of determining terms for a transaction based on the state of the transaction reservation.

The method according to a fourth invention is characterized in that, in the method according to the second or third invention, the accepting step further comprises a step of confirming whether the reservation has been accepted.

The method according to a fifth invention is characterized in that, a reception method for deal booking according to claim 4, characterized in that it further comprises the following steps: a method according to claim 4, further comprising the steps of: determining favors for the reserved transaction which has been confirmed to be accepted by the confirmation step, based on its terms; and offering the determined favors.

The system according to a sixth invention is characterized that, a system for accepting transaction reservation provided with a plurality of terminal devices, and an apparatus for accepting transaction reservation, connected to the terminal devices respectively, to accept reservation for a transaction of a transaction target, characterized in that said accepting apparatus comprises:

(i) a terms determination means for determining terms for a transaction of a transaction target; and (ii) a transaction terms display means for displaying the terms for the

transaction determined by the terms determinations means;
said terminal devices comprises: (i) an accepting means for
accepting reservation application data which represents
reservation application for a transaction of a transaction
5 target based on the displayed terms; and (ii) a transmission
means for transmitting the reservation application data
accepted by the accepting means to the accepting apparatus;
and said accepting apparatus further comprises a storage
means for storing received reservation application data,
10 when the reservation application data is received.

The apparatus for accepting transaction reservation to accept reservation application for a transaction of a transaction target, according to a seventh invention is comprising: a terms determination means for determining terms for a transaction of a transaction target; a transaction terms display means for displaying the determined terms for the transaction by the terms determination means; and a storage means for storing the reservation application data which represents reservation application for a transaction of a transaction target based on the transaction terms displayed by the terms display means, when the reservation application data is input.

The recording medium according to a eighth invention is characterized that, a computer-readable recording medium
25 storing programs to make a computer accept reservation

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application for a transaction of a transaction target, said programs comprises: a program code means for causing a computer, to determine terms for a transaction of a transaction target; a program code means for causing a
5 computer to display the determined terms; and a program code means for causing a computer to store reservation application data which represents reservation application for a transaction based on the displayed transaction terms, when the reservation application data is input.

10 In the first invention, information on transaction favors for a transaction target defined for each time zone, which is divided at least with regards to coming time of customers to the shop, are electronically presented to a plurality of customers. And, information on transaction
15 reservation showing transaction reservation at the time zone selected by the customer are accepted electronically. Then, a transaction with favors for the reserved transaction target is performed, when coming time of the customer to the shop, or the finish time of the transaction is included in
20 the time zone in association with the above information on transaction reservation.

As mentioned above, a lot of customers may be able to promptly have information, by electronic presentation of the information of transaction favors, that special services
25 such as special prices at a sale time zone and bargain

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products are offered.

Customers may perform transaction reservation without a geographic restriction by electronic accepting of information on transaction reservation, and receive the
5 favors shown in information on transaction favors, by performing deals based on the above booking.

Here, the finish time of the transaction means the purchase time in the case of purchasing products at the shop, or time to receive services in the case of receiving
10 offered service.

In the second, sixth, and seventh inventions, terms for reserved transaction target are defined and displayed. Then, reservation to perform transaction of a transaction target is accepted, based on the above displayed terms.

15 Thus, a lot of customers may promptly have information, by disclosure of defined terms for transactions, that special services are offered.

It may be possible to predict, by accepting reservation to perform transaction based on the above terms for
20 transaction, to what degree of transactions based on the terms are actually performed. Thereby, they in a shop may obtain information to what degree of products should be prepared.

In the third invention, terms for transaction are
25 defined based on reservation states for transaction.

The above and further objects and features of the invention will be more fully be apparent from the following detailed description with accompanying drawings.

5 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 shows a block diagram of a configuration of a system for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention;

FIG. 2 shows a block diagram of a configuration of an apparatus for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention;

FIG. 3 shows a conceptual diagram of a format example of a file stored in a bargain data base (DB);

FIGS. 4A through 4D show conceptual diagrams of format examples of a table stored in a basic data DB;

FIG. 5 shows a conceptual diagram of a format example of a file stored in a reservation data DB;

FIG. 6 shows a flow chart of an operation flow of a system for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention at registration processing of bargain data, or basic data;

FIG. 7 shows a flow chart of an operation flow of an apparatus for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention at display of bargain data;

FIG. 8 shows a flow chart of an operation flow of a system for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention at accepting reservation;

FIG. 9 shows a flow chart of an operation flow of a system for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention at confirmation of reservation;

FIG. 10 shows a block diagram of a configuration of an apparatus for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 2 of the present invention;

FIG. 11 shows a conceptual diagram of a format example of a file stored in a favored point DB; and

FIG. 12 shows a flow chart of an operation flow of a
 15 system for accepting transaction reservation according to
 embodiment 2 of the present invention at confirmation of
 booking.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

20 (Embodiment 1)

FIG. 1 shows a block diagram of a configuration of the system for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention. In FIG. numerals 1, 1, 1 ... show terminal devices, which are provided in customer's home 10 and office 11, and a shop 12. In the

customer's home 10 and office 11, confirmation of the contents of services which are offered at each shop, and reservation are performed by the customer through the terminal devices 1, 1 ... When the terminal devices 1, 1 ... are portable devices such as portable telephones, it may be possible for the customer to perform the confirmation of the contents of services, and the reservation of them at any required time and at any necessary place.

In the shop 12, registration of service contents and basic data for definition of the service contents, confirmation of reservation contents, and so on are performed by employees of the shop 12 through the terminal devices 1, 1

An apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 for performing communications with the terminal devices 1, 1 ... is connected to a network 3, and provided in, for example, a machine center 13 managed by a plurality of shops. The accepting apparatus 2 is not limited to the above provision and may be also installed in the shop, or may be consigned to a service provider, and so on.

FIG. 2 shows a block diagram of a configuration of the apparatus for transaction reservation 2 according to embodiment 1 of the present invention. In FIG. 2, the accepting apparatus 2 for transaction reservation has a CPU 21, to which a RAM 22 to store data generated in the above

below. A first data base, that is, the bargain data DB 240 stores bargain data (i.e. service data) on special services at a specified time zone such as a sale time zone. The above bargain data is received from the terminal devices 1, 1 ... according to the procedure described below.

FIG. 3 shows a conceptual diagram of a format example of a file stored in the bargain data DB 240. As shown in FIG. 3, five fields, that is, a shop ID field 40a, a date field 40b, a time field 40c, and a field for bargain target 40d, and a discount rate field 40e are provided in the bargain data DB 240.

A shop identifier (hereinafter, called as a shop ID) to identify the shop, a date when services offered by the shop are performed, and time when the services are performed are stored in the shop ID field 40a, the date field 40b, and time field 40c, respectively.

And, product names of target products for special services, and discount rates applied to the above products are stored in the field of bargain target 40d, and the discount rate field 40e, respectively. Moreover, the above discount rate is calculated according to the procedure described below.

The format example shown in FIG. 3 denotes that, for example, in a shop with a shop ID "A", all the products dealt in the shop are uniformly discounted at 10% in their

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prices between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. on November 10, 1999.

A second data base, that is, the basic data DB 241 stores a various kinds of data (hereinafter, called as basic data), which are used for calculation of the above discount rate, in a form of a table. The above basic data are received from the terminal devices 1, 1 ..., according to the procedure described below.

FIG. 4 shows a conceptual diagram of a format example of a table stored in the basic data DB 241. FIG. 4A shows a table with a target number of persons coming to a shop and a prospective number of the persons, in which the target number of persons coming to the shop and the prospective number of the persons at each time zone are defined and stored. FIGS. 4B and 4C show a day-of-week coefficient table and a weather coefficient table, respectively. The above coefficients are defined for each day-of-week and each weather, according to the prospective number of persons coming to the shop, and stored in the above tables, respectively. Moreover, FIG. 4D shows a discount rate table which stores discount rates corresponding to reservation rates calculated according to the procedure described below.

The table stored in the basic data DB 241 is not limited to the above table, and for example, a table including coefficients defined according to prospective number of persons coming to the shop for each month or each

temperature may be stored. Moreover, the above tables are prepared and stored in each shop.

A third database, that is, the reservation data DB 242 stores reservation data on the reservation accepted from each customer. And the above reservation data is received from the terminal devices 1, 1 ... according to the procedure described later.

FIG. 5 shows a conceptual diagram of a format example of a file stored in a reservation data DB 242. As shown in FIG. 5, five fields, that is, a customer ID field 42a, a shop ID field 42b, a date and time field 42c, and a reservation data field 42d, and a reservation ID field 42e are provided in the reservation data DB 242.

A customer identifier (hereinafter, called as a customer ID) to identify each customer and a shop ID for each shop are stored in the customer ID field 42a and the shop ID field 42b, respectively. Moreover, a date and time when the reservation has been accepted, data showing the contents of the reservation, and a reservation identifier (hereinafter, called as a reservation ID) to identify the reservation are stored in the date and time field 42c, the reservation data field 42d, and the reservation ID field 42e, respectively.

The format example shown in FIG. 5 denotes that, for
25 example, at 10 a.m. on November 10, 1999, a customer with a

shop, that is, prospective number of customers coming to a shop without reservation (S301). The above calculation is performed with the product of the target number of persons coming to a shop shown in FIG. 4A, the prospective number of persons coming to a shop stored in the table with the prospective number of persons coming to the shop, the coefficients stored in the day-of-week coefficient table shown in FIG. 4B, and coefficients stored in the weather coefficient table shown in FIG. 4C. According to the calculation example, for example, the prospective number of persons coming to a shop without reservation at 10 a.m. on a rainy Saturday is calculated by the product of 50 (persons) for a prospective number of persons coming to a shop at 10 a.m., 80(%) for a weather coefficient on a rainy day, and 120(%) for a day-of-week coefficient on a Saturday to obtain 48 (persons).

Then, a reservation rate of the reservation which each customer has performed is calculated (S302) as described below, based on the prospective number of persons coming to the shop without reservation, which has been calculated at the step S301. The above calculation is performed by division of, for example, the reservation number showing cumulative number of reservation by a value obtained through subtraction of the above prospective number of persons coming to the shop without reservation from the target

the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 stores the received discount rate to the discount rate field 40e of the bargain data DB 240 and displays it.

5 The above processing may be also executed when display of the bargain data is required from the terminal devices 1, 1 ... of customers. Moreover, after the steps S301 through S304 are executed at a regular interval, the step S305 may be configured to be executed when display of the bargain data is required from the terminal devices 1, 1 ... of
10 customers.

FIG. 8 shows a flow chart of an operation flow of the system for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention at accepting reservation.

15 The terminal devices 1, 1 ... display a screen for promotion to input the reservation application date showing the application of the reservation on the devices themselves. Each customer inputs the reservation application data with the devices.

20 When the reservation application data is received (S401), the terminal devices 1, 1 ... send the received reservation application data to the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 (S402).

25 The apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 registers the received reservation application data in the

reservation data DB 242 (S502), when the reservation application data is received from the terminal devices 1, 1 ... (S501), and transmits registration-completion data, denoting that the registration to the reservation data DB 242 has been completed, to the terminal devices 1, 1 ... (S503). The registration-completion data includes a reservation ID numbered at registration to the reservation data DB 242.

The devices 1, 1 ... display the received registration-completion information on the display screen of the devices themselves (S404), when the registration-completion data is received from the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 (S403).

The above reservation ID may be numerals, bar codes, and the like. In the case of numerals for the reservation ID, the customer tells the reservation ID to a cashier by verbal communication at payment, after writing down the ID on a sheet of paper to bring it to the shop. In another embodiment, the numerals or the bar codes and so on for the reservation ID may be printed with a printer, and the customer may bring the printed one to the shop. In the above case, the reservation ID may be confirmed on the terminal devices 1, 1 ... of the shop, using an optical character reader (OCR) or a bar code reader. Moreover, the terminal devices 1, 1 ... may not be special devices for

transaction reservation, but maybe a POS (point of sales) terminal.

In addition, the reservation ID may be stored in a memory device of a portable telephone, and brought to a shop to confirm the reservation ID by communication between the terminal devices 1, 1 ... of the shop and the portable telephone.

Further, in a shop having a membership system, the presence of the reservation may be confirmed, using a number of member in stead of the reservation ID. In the above case, the confirmation of the reservation ID may be confirmed by collation between the customer ID stored in the customer ID field 42a of the reservation data DB 242 and the member number written on a member card, when the member card is read at payment.

Thereby, each customer may perform application of desired reservation, and, as there is a case to change the above reservation rate and the discount rate according to the reservation application, the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 updates the bargain data DB 240 according to the above procedure, in the above case, and then discloses new bargain data on the network 3.

Each customer goes out to each shop at reserved time to tell the reservation ID at the shop. Then, the reservation
25 may be confirmed according to a procedure described below.

FIG. 9 shows a flow chart of an operation flow of the system for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 1 of the present invention at confirmation of reservation.

5 In each shop, the employees and so on input reservation
confirmation data including the above reservation ID to the
terminal devices 1, 1 ... in order to confirm the
reservation, when the reservation ID is told. The terminal
devices 1, 1 ... transmit the accepted reservation
10 confirmation data to the apparatus for accepting transaction
reservation 2 (S602), when the reservation confirmation data
is accepted (S601).

When the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 receives the reservation confirmation data from the terminal devices 1, 1 ... (S701), referring to the reservation data DB 242 (S702), the reservation ID included in the reservation confirmation data is retrieved as a key (S703). In the case of failure in the retrieval (NO at the step S703), the confirmation failure data showing that the reservation confirmation has not been performed is transmitted to the terminal devices 1, 1 ... (S704).

The devices 1, 1 ... display the received confirmation failure data on the display screen of the devices themselves (S604), when the confirmation failure data is received from the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2

(S603).

On the other hand, when there is success in the retrieval of the reservation data DB 242 at the step S703 (YES at the step S703), the confirmation success data showing that the reservation confirmation has been performed is transmitted to the terminal devices 1, 1 ... (S705).

The devices 1, 1 ... display the received confirmation success data on the display screen of the devices themselves (S606), when the confirmation success data is received from the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 (S605).

Then, when the reservation has been confirmed, and the time of the above confirmation is included in the time zone shown in the reservation data, the customer may receive the services in association with the reservation.

Moreover, when the time of coming to the shop is included in the time zone shown in the reservation data, the customer may be also configured to receive the above services. In the above case, the time of coming to a shop of the customer may be configured to be identified, for example, by a method in which the customer receives a piece of paper with printed time of coming to the shop when the customer comes to the shop.

And, when the accepting service for transaction
25 reservation realized by the system for accepting transaction

reservation according to the present invention is performed by a service provider and so on as an agent, the service provider may claim the agency service charge from the side (a shop and so on) asking the services. In the above case, the claimed charge may be set as a constant amount, or it may be calculated based on the amount for the transaction, when the transaction in association with the reservation is actually performed.

(Embodiment 2)

FIG. 10 shows a block diagram of a configuration of the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 2 of the present invention.

In the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 according to embodiment 2 of the present invention, a fourth data base, that is, a favored point DB 243 is added to the hard disk 24, different from the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 according to embodiment 1 of the present invention. The programs in the apparatus for accepting transaction reservation 2 according to embodiment 2 of the present invention are stored in a portable recording medium 300. Moreover, the programs are stored in a recording medium 5 installed in an external server computer 4, and they may be downloaded. As the configurations, other than the above, are similar to those previously described with reference to embodiment 1, they

are denoted by the same reference numerals, and the description will be eliminated.

FIG. 11 shows a conceptual diagram of a format example of a file stored in the above fourth data base, that is, a
5 favored point DB 243.

As shown in FIG. 11, the favored point DB 243 has three fields, that is, a customer ID field 43a, a shop ID field 43b, and a point field 43c.

The customer ID field 43a, the shop ID field 43b, and
10 the point field 43c, respectively, store a customer ID to identify each customer, a shop ID of each shop, and points corresponding to monetary values, with which, for example, a product with a value of ¥1 may be purchased by one point.

For example, the format example shown in FIG. 11
15 denotes that 500 points, which may be used in a shop with a shop ID of "A", are given to a customer with a customer ID of "123456".

Now, operation of the system for accepting transaction reservation according to embodiment 2 of the present
20 invention will be described. But, the registration of the bargain data and basic data, the display of the bargain data, and the operation at each processing for accepting the reservation are similar to those of embodiment 1 to eliminate the description.

25 FIG. 12 shows a flow chart of an operation flow of the

system for accepting transaction reservation according to
embodiment 2 of the present invention at confirmation of
reservation. Processing similar to that in embodiment 1 is
denoted by the same reference numerals, and its description
5 will be eliminated.

In the case of the success in the retrieval of the
reservation data DB 242 at the step S703 (YES at the step
703), points corresponding to the discount rate for the
confirmed reservation is calculated (S801). The above
10 calculation is performed by, for example, making points
correspond to the charges equivalent to the discounted
amount. According to the above calculation, the points
become 500, when the discount rate for a products with a
price of ¥5,000 is 10%.

15 The favored point DB 243 is updated by storing the
point calculated as shown above in the point field 43c of
the favored point DB 243 (S802). And, based on the updated
contents, data on the newly added points and the cumulative
points is transmitted to the terminal devices 1, 1 ...
20 (S803).

The devices 1, 1 ... display the received point data on
the display screen of the devices themselves (S902), when
the point data is received from the apparatus for accepting
transaction reservation 2 (S901).

25 In the present embodiment, the point calculation is

performed when the reserved transaction is performed, but the above calculation may be performed at a predetermined time interval, or every predetermined cumulative number of transactions.

5 As mentioned above, when the reservation is confirmed,
customers may obtain points corresponding to the contents of
reserved services. Thereby, as there is no apparent sign
that special services shown in the bargain data are offered,
customers who have come to the shop without reservation have
10 no feeling that they are suffered from any feeling of loss.

And, in the case of no execution of the reserved transaction, reduction in the cumulative points by an appropriate points may be performed. In the above case, a fixed point previously determined may be reduced, or the reduced points may be calculated according to reserved products and services.

As this invention may be embodied in several forms without departing from the spirit of essential characteristics thereof, the present embodiment is therefore, illustrative and not restrictive, since the scope of the invention is defined by the appended claims rather than by the description preceding them, and all changes that fall within metes and bounds of the claims, or equivalence of such metes and bounds thereof are therefore intended to be embraced by the claims.